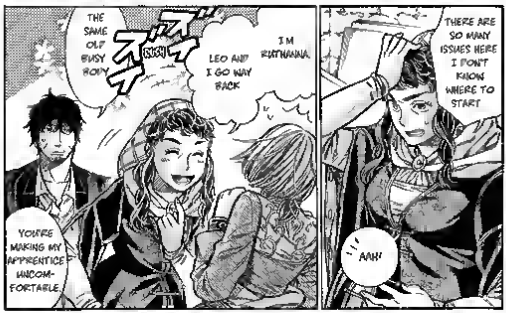
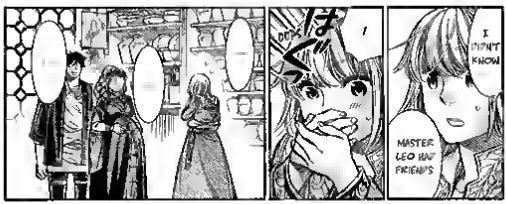
Arte

Art and Story by
Kei Ohkubo

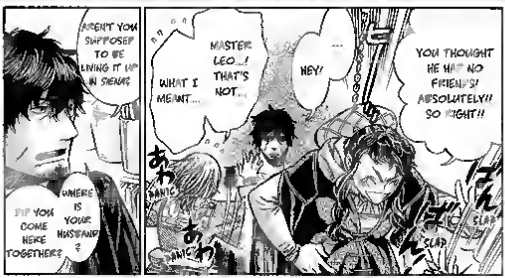
Chapter 17 The Nobility of Venice Part 2

WELL.
IT WASN'T EASY, BUT WE'VE SOMEHOW PULLED THROUGH.
ARE THE OTHER WORKSHOP APPRENTICES OKAY WITH THIS?
AND HER PARENTS?
AND SHE'S A NOBLE!? WHAT ABOUT THE GUILD!?
THIS SIGHORINA?
THIS LONELY SIGHORINA IS YOUR APPRENTICE!?


THE SAME OLD BUSY MOM
OOOH
I'M RIATHANNA.
LEO AND I GO WAY BACK
YOU'RE MAKING MY APPRENTICE UNCOMFORTABLE.
THERE ARE SO MANY ISSUES HERE I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START
AAH!


DOKI
I DIDN'T KNOW
MASTER LEO HAS FRIENDS

AH!
HA!
HA!
HA!
YOU'RE LEO'S APPRENTICE ALRIGHT!!


AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE LIVING IT UP IN SWEDEN?
WHERE IS YOUR HUSBAND?
DID YOU COME HERE TOGETHER?
MASTER LEO...! THAT'S NOT...
WHAT I MEANT...
HEY!
...
YOU THOUGHT HE HAD NO FRIENDS? ABSOLUTELY!! SO RIGHT!!
あわ
PANIC
あわ
PANIC
ばん
SLAP
ばん
SLAP

SO YOU MADE THE TRIP TO FIRENZE BY YOURSELF...?
NOT
...HE DIDN'T COME
...
MY HUSBAND?

YEAH
IT'S JUST ME

YES
ARTE

WE HAVE SOME CATCHING UP TO DO
WOULD YOU MIND STEPPING OUT FOR A WHILE?

THU-
-D!!
LOOKING GOOD!
SHE SAID SHE'S AN OLD FRIEND OF MASTER LEO'S
THAT PERSON
RATHOUNA

I'VE SEEN SOMEONE WHO ISN'T A CUSTOMER BEING SO FRIENDLY TO MASTER LEO...
IT'S THE FIRST TIME...
...
...
YES!
BANG
Y-
FLUTTER
OPEN
HEY
ARTE
HUH?
ME?
WE'RE DONE COME DOWN STAIRS.
KATHARINA WANTS TO SAY GOODBYE BEFORE SHE LEAVES

I'M GLAD IT WAS YOU THAT I ASKED FOR DIRECTIONS
I WANTED TO GIVE MY THANKS BEFORE I LEFT
HEY
ISN'T HE A BIT CHEERLESS? HE SHOULD TRY TELLING JOKES SOMETIMES
IT STILL AMAZES ME YOU HAVE SUCH A LOVELY APPREN TICE
SHE... UH
DOESN'T HOLD HACK, DOES SHE?
BUT YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT
JUST KIDDING!
AHAHA!
YOU
CIAO LEO
IT WAS NICE CATCHING UP WITH YOU.

IF THERE IS ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, JUST SAY SO!
KATHANNA!

I WILL.
THANK YOU, LEO
STUNNED
SHE'S AN OLD FRIEND
NO I DON'T MIND
FOR TAKING YOUR TIME
SORRY

FATHANNA IS MY MASTER'S.
ONLY DAUGHTER.
DROP
OH
THAT'S WHO SHE IS?
YEAH
I GUESS I'LL GO OUT AND HAVE THE TOUGH BAKED
HMF
OH, THANKS
UH

BE
BACK IN A FEW
AH
SURE

BUSTLE

BUSTLE
BUSTLE
BUSTLE

HERE.
THA

I THOUGHT I'D RETURN THE BOOK YOU LENT ME
I SAW YOU LEAVING THE BAKERY, SO
HUFF
HUFF

WAIT UP!

AH!
ARTE!

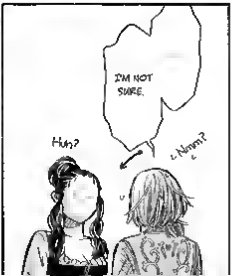
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO CRY
YOU OKAY?
EH?
OH?

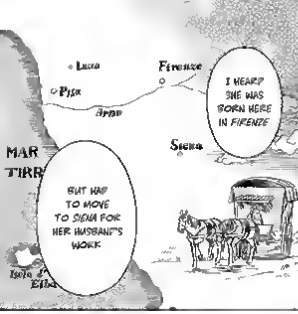
WHAT'S WRONG, ARTE?
EH?

Nmm.

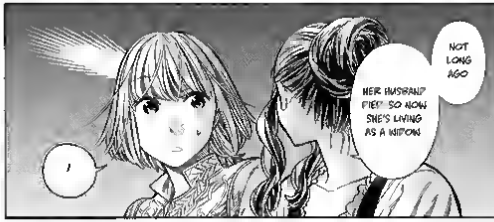
OH
I DON'T KNOW
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

AHH.
IF IT'S ABOUT THE WOMAN RATHANA.
I'VE HEARD RUMORS AT MY WORK PLACE
BUSTLE
BUSTLE


I'M NOT SURE.
Hun?
Nnnn?


Lucca
Pisa
Arezzo
Florence
Siena
I HEARD SHE WAS BORN HERE IN FIRENZE
BUT HAD TO MOVE TO SIENA FOR HER HUSBAND'S WORK

THE NEEDLE-WORK KEEPS THEIR HANDS BUSY BUT NOT THEIR MOUTHS.
THAT'S WHY THERE'S A LOT OF GOSSIP-MONGERS.
I OVER-HEARD QUITE A FEW THINGS.


NOT LONG AGO
HER HUSBAND PIED SO NOW SHE'S LIVING AS A WIDOW
I

WELL
I'M NOT SURE IF ANY OF IT IS TRUE BUT

RUTHANNA

EH ?
SHE SEEMED
SO CHEERFUL

I HEARD THE HUSBAND'S FAMILY IS REFUSING TO RETURN
HER SIZABLE DOWRY SHE BROUGHT WHEN SHE CAME TO THE FAMILY

SO SHE MADE THE TRIP FROM SIENA TO NEGOTIATE THE RETURN OF THE DOWRY.
...
HER DOWRY...?

UH...
WELL...
IT'S JUST A RUMOR.
SO?
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
WELL...
DON'T YOU GET YOUR DOWRY BACK AFTER BEING WIDOWED?
THAT'S HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE

SHE AND MASTER LEO THEY WERE QUITE CHUMMY
HMM
I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE HER
I GUESS I WAS JUST WONDERING ABOUT HER
EHE
I DON'T TELL ME
I
AHH, IT SEEMS, I'M IN LOVE WITH MASTER LEO!
WOOP
SLUNT
あギリ
WHA
W-W-WHAT...?!
AH!
DARCIA
HEY!

WHAT ARE YOU TWO UP TO?
STILL PRACTICING OUR LETTERS ARE WE?
WOW! YOUR BOOK!
EH?
THERE'RE SO MANY WORDS!
AH!
YOU'RE AMAZING!
LIKE PROPER SCHOLARS AREN'T YOU? YOU TWO ARE GENIUSES!
UHH
EIEM
NMM
UHH...

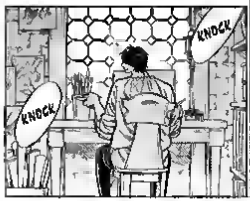
OVERWHELMED
CALM DOWN
THERE IS NOTHING AMAZING ABOUT ME I KNOW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!
CALM DOWN, FARCIA.

A FEW DAYS LATER
OKAY THEN,
MASTER LEO

BE CAREFUL THEN
I'M GOING TO RUN A FEW ERRANDS
CLINK
ALRIGHT
MASTER LEO
HAS BEEN DOWN EVER SINCE...
SHCK
SHCK
Ahhh
THE WEATHER IS GREAT TODAY— Let's get to it
AHHH!

CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK

CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK


KNOCK
KNOCK

たたたたっ

!
WHO IS IT ?
CREAK
YES

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU AGAIN ABOUT
YOUR APPRENTICE
IS THIS A GOOD TIME?
IT'S YOU...
GREET-INGS

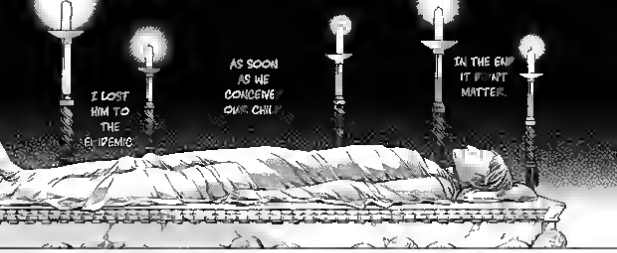
THE APOTHECARY TALKS TOO MUCH
TODAY'S SALES TALK WAS EVEN LONGER THAN USUAL.
HAAAH
I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO GET AWAY—
CLINK
CLANK
I BEG YOU!
EERMM
IF I'D FINISHED THE ERRAND'S EARLY I COULD'VE BOUGHT SOMETHING TO NIBBLE ON
PLEASE RETURN IT!
THE POWRY MY FATHER GAVE ME MEANS SO MUCH

PUSHY AREN'T YOU!?
IT'S FOR THE CHILD!
WITHOUT IT I DON'T KNOW HOW WE'LL GET BY!
SHOVE
WE'VE ALREADY GIVEN ALL THAT WE HAD!
I'VE TOLD YOU, WE CAN'T GIVE YOU WHAT WE DON'T HAVE!
UM...
I
SLAM
IF WE GIVE YOU ANY MORE WE'LL GO BANKRUPT OURSELVES!
WHAT A RELENTLESS WOMAN!

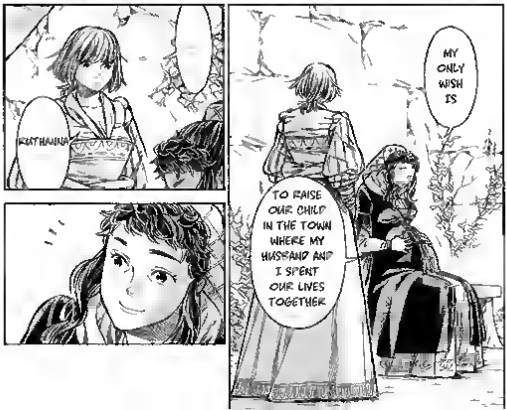
YOU
ARE YOU OKAY?
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
AH!
BE CARE-FUL!
I'M FINE
OWW!
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
Who's she?
What happened?
What is this?
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
COME
LET'S GET AWAY FROM ALL THESE EYES

PHEW
THANKS. I'M CALMING DOWN
THAT'S GOOD
MM
SNIFF
IT WON'T TAKE LONG FOR THE RUMORS TO SPREAD
I'VE HEARD THE RUMORS
I'M SORRY
THEY WON'T RETURN YOUR POWRY
SO IT'S TRUE

MY FATHER ARRANGED A SIZABLE DOWRY...
I WAS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF MARRYING A MAN I HAD NEVER MET BEFORE... BUT...
UNTIL MY HUSBAND'S DEATH...
I WAS HAPPY, YOU KNOW.
WE MOVED TO SIEVA FOR HIS WORK. WE WERE HAPPY THERE.
WE SOMEHOW GOT ALONG REALLY WELL.


I LOST HIM TO THE EPIDEMIC
AS SOON AS WE CONCEIVED OUR CHILD
IN THE END IT DIDN'T MATTER.

BUT THAT'S IF ALL GOES WELL.
IF IT'S A BOY, I MAY BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE IT AS HIS GUARDIAN
AND THERE'S STILL SOME TIME BEFORE I'M FAE
I DON'T EVEN HAVE THE RIGHT OF INHERITANCE.


KATHARINA
MY ONLY WISH IS
TO RAISE OUR CHILD IN THE TOWN WHERE MY HUSBAND AND I SPENT OUR LIVES TOGETHER

EH?
ANYWAYS. I'M STILL SURPRISED!
SOMEONE WORKING ALONGSIDE LEO IT'S SO BIZARRE!
EVERYONE HERE IS WORKING HARD IT SEEMS!
LEO,
HE WAS ALWAYS BY HIMSELF.
MASTER
I REMEMBER THE TIMES I'D FOLLOW FATHER TO HIS WORK-SHOP AND SAW LEO...
...KEEPING TO HIMSELF. HE WORKED DILIGENTLY IN SILENCE
COULD YOU LOOK AT MY PROGRESS?
NICE, YOU'RE DOING GOOD... HERE, YOU WANT TO...

JEEZ!
WHO DID THIS TO YOU
I'LL TELL MY FATHER!
HE ALWAYS HAS SOME NEW INJURY
I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS FROM THE OTHER APPRENTICES
OW
OUCH!
LEO WOULD NEVER OPEN UP TO ANYONE
I'M FINE
NOBODY DID THIS TO ME.
I DID IT ON MY OWN
LEO
I
WILL BE LEAVING FOR SIENA.
NMM.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT...
THE ONLY REASON HE EVEN TALKS TO ME WAS PROBABLY BECAUSE I WAS HIS MASTER'S DAUGHTER

YOU NEED TO MAKE A FRIEND OR FIND SOMEONE TO BE WITH...
DON'T WORRY. I'M FINE BY MYSELF
I WORRY ABOUT YOU...
FATHER HAS PASSED...
AT THIS RATE YOU'LL BE ALL ALONE...
ENOUGH ABOUT ME,
WHEN YOU GET TO SIENA,
ENJOY YOUR LIFE THERE, RUTHANNA.
I NEVER IMAGINED
THAT HE WOULD?
LEO NEVER ONCE OPENED UP
EVEN IN THE END.
LEO, YOU IDIOT!

Eh?
HAVE SUCH A YOUNG AND LOVELY SIGNORINA BY HIS SIDE!
GRAB
REGARDLESS OF HOW IT CAME TO BE
WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU AT HIS SIDE,
I'M RELIEVED!

I RECEIVED A PLEASANT SURPRISE
I THOUGHT COMING BACK TO FIRENZE WOULD ONLY BE FILLED WITH HARDSHIP, BUT
FUTHANKA
WAS SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT MASTER LEO_

NICE PERSON...
WHAT A...
BUSTLE
BUSTLE
BUSTLE
MASTER LEO'S GOING TO BE UPSET IF HE THINKS I'VE BEEN WANDERING AROUND
TUC
I GUESS I SHOULD BE ON MY WAY TOO!
DID THAT WOMAN FAITHANA LEAVE YET?
SUCH A SCENE... HOW PITIFUL!
THE NEIGHBORS WILL BE TALKING ABOUT US!
PEEK
PEEK

DID YOU SEE THAT WOMAN
ON HER KNEES CRYING THOSE CROCODILE TEARS IN FRONT OF OUR HOME ?
HOW DISGRACEFUL! SHE MAKES IT SEEM LIKE WE'RE TO BLAME
GO TIDY UP THE ENTRANCE
YES, SIGNORA.
THE ONLY REASON WE EVEN APPROVED THE MARRIAGE TO
AN ARTISAN'S DAUGHTER WAS FINE TO THAT SIZABLE DOWRY
THAT FRUITLESS WOMAN SHE'S WORTH-LESS
AND OUR SON DIED WHAT A PEST
THE AUDACITY OF THAT WOMAN
WHAT A MONEY HUNGRY TRAMP!

SLAM
HURRY IT UP AND CLOSE THE DOOR!
HAVE YOU FINISHED SWEEPING YET?
YES SIGNORA! MY APOLOGIES!
WE SOMEHOW GOT ALONG REALLY WELL...
I WAS HAPPY, YOU KNOW

MY ONLY WISH IS TO
RAISE OUR CHILD IN THE TOWN WHERE MY HUSBAND AND I SPENT OUR LIVES TOGETHER
What can Arte do, to save Ruthanna and her child?
✦ Ch. 17 END ✦